

**January 2005**

Dear Parents,

The district is committed to providing students with a quality school breakfast and lunch program. The importance of a quality student meal program is well researched. You may have noticed that school lunch programs have been in the news a lot recently. The focus of most of the news programs has been the nutritional quality of the student meal programs. Our food service program plans and presents menus based on nutritional standards established by the Department of Public Instruction. Although we currently meet those guidelines, our goal is to continuously look for ways to improve the nutritional value of our meals. Toward that end, with cooperation from the county extension office, a Nutrition Committee has been formed. The goal of the committee is to seek and implement menu options that promote healthy meal habits. Parent input and participation is very important. Parents interested in participating on this committee are encouraged to contact the district office so that we can notify you of our meetings.

Most recently, the district applied for and was awarded a grant to initiate a breakfast program at the High School. Beginning second semester, high school students will be able to purchase breakfast in the high school cafeteria. During the first week of second semester, we will be offering free breakfast to all high school students to introduce them to the new breakfast program from 7:30am to 8:00am.

While reviewing our food service program, we discovered another area that we need to focus efforts on to improve. Notably, we are experiencing significant numbers of student meal accounts that are not paid up and current. The pre-pay program was established to make it easier for parents to pay for school lunch and breakfast. Family accounts are set up to minimize transactions parents need to make. Discussions with the principals and food service staff indicate that student accounts are frequently in arrears. Frequently this is the result of students purchasing additional ala carte items or entrees.

In order to insure quality meals at value prices it is essential that parents and students work together to maintain positive balances in their accounts. Parents can place daily purchasing limits on the accounts of their children to avoid a surprise shortage in their accounts. Outlined below are the current costs for various meal and milk options:

Pre-School Elementary Middle High School

Breakfast .60 .60 1.00

Lunch 1.35 1.60 1.60

Extra Milk .15 (4 oz.) .25 (8 oz.) .25 (8 oz.) .25 (8 oz.)

Extra Entrée .75 .75 .75

Ala Carte not available not available priced by item

To insure that account balances are kept current, the district will institute some changes to the current practices. Effective with the beginning of second semester the following procedures will be implemented:

Students will be notified verbally and Parents by letter when the account for their student/family drops below a balance of \$5. Parent notifications will be mailed out once each week on Thursday.

When a student account drops to zero or has a negative balance, the student will be notified and restricted to the alternative lunch option of a peanut butter sandwich and milk at a cost to the student's account of \$.40.

When a student/family account reaches a balance due of \$15, the student will not be permitted to participate in the hot lunch program until the account is fully restored with a positive balance of at least \$5.

Families experiencing financial hardship are encouraged to apply for the district free and reduced lunch program at any time.

Parents can monitor account balances through the district website. A separate set of food service account set up instructions is also located on the district website. Those without access to the website can contact the school secretary for a summary of the balance. Purchasing detail is available on the website only. Monitoring and maintenance of a positive food service account balance is the responsibility of parents.

Our goal is to provide students with a quality menu that encourages positive nutritional habits. Parent comments and suggestions are welcome at any time.

Sincerely,

F. James Harlan, Ph.D.

District Administrator